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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000873

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA  
ALSO FOR IO A/S BRIMMER  
P FOR DRUSSELL, RRANGASWAMY  
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NSC FOR SHAPIRO, MCDERMOTT  
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PARIS FOR JMILLER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [UNGA](#) [LE](#)  
SUBJECT: HARIRI WELCOMES E.O. 13441 RENEWAL AND CRITICIZES  
ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF UNSCR 1701

REF: BEIRUT 819

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

#### SUMMARY

1. (C) In a July 31 meeting with the Ambassador, Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri declared himself "quite happy" about renewal of the E.O. 13441 designation and did not consider it a barrier to cabinet formation. Lebanese negotiations with Israel are out of the question until "Israel solves the Palestinian issue," although the 1949 armistice agreement is an appropriate framework for negotiations. Hariri promised "a new vision" for the LAF's strategy in the coming months. Regarding UNGA, he believes President Sleiman will attend, and he will not attend if Sleiman does so. Hariri's confrontational tone on defense-related topics may reflect his assuming a more muscular role as prime minister. End summary.

HARIRI "QUITE HAPPY" WITH E.O. 13441 RENEWAL

2. (C) In a July 31 meeting with the Ambassador, Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri declared himself "quite happy" about renewal of the E.O. 13441 designation and did not consider it a barrier to cabinet formation. While Hizballah described the renewal as "blatant interference" in Lebanese affairs and an "aggressive act," Hariri assessed that the SARG would downplay the issue.

NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL UNTIL AFTER THE PALESTINIANS

3. (C) On Lebanese negotiations with Israel, within the framework of the 1949 armistice or otherwise, Hariri declared them out of the question until "Israel solves the Palestinian issue." The 1949 framework for negotiations is in the constitution and thus an appropriate framework, but "Israel is not serious right now." Hariri sharply criticized Israeli reactions to the Khirbet Selim explosion (reftel) - the first Lebanese violation of UNSCR 1701 in three years - while Israeli overflights and its occupation of Gajar are daily provocations. "Israel always wants a good deal that is

a bad deal for the Lebanese, one that violates our sovereignty," he asserted. Hariri rebuffed our earlier complaints in response to the Lebanese mission to the UN's sharply-worded letter to the UNSC that absolved the GOL and Hizballah of the Khirbet Selim incident and accused Israel of never admitting its violations of 1701. Egypt lost its control over the Gaza border by submitting to Israeli conditions in the 1979 armistice agreement, he explained. Lebanon will make no such mistakes and will say "plainly and clearly" that no concessions will be made. "We have Hizballah in our government, but Israel has worse in its government."

#### NEW LAF STRATEGY WILL ADDRESS ISRAELI VIOLATIONS

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¶4. (C) The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) following the government formation will be "a different LAF," said Hariri. He declared he was unhappy with the LAF for "protecting the Lebanese people" and implied the military must "act" to address Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty. When the Ambassador urged that the LAF develop a comprehensive strategy paper, Hariri promised "a new vision" for the LAF, strategy in the coming months. (Note: He did not complain about LAF Commander Kahwagi by name this time, as he has in several recent meetings. End note.)

#### PRESIDENT SLEIMAN WILL LIKELY ATTEND UNGA

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¶5. (C) Hariri said he had spoken with President Michel

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Sleiman about the United Nations General Assembly and believes the President will attend. If Sleiman goes to New York, Hariri will not. The same day, Presidential Advisor Naji Abi Assi told the Ambassador that he is now "80% sure" Sleiman will travel to New York. This is a change from earlier in the month, when Abi Assi understood Sleiman would defer until UNGA 2010.

#### COMMENT

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¶6. (C) Hariri was brusque and quick to recite the litany of Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty whenever any topic related to the LAF was raised, even ones related to military assistance. His confrontational tone on defense-related topics may mark his perceived need to project a more muscular role as he assumes the mantle of prime minister. Hariri played his cards very close to his chest on cabinet formation, as did FPM negotiator and caretaker Minister of Telecommunications Gebran Bassil, with whom PolChief met the same day. End comment.

SISON